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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9749  
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMCONSUL CHENNAI  
AMCONSUL MUMBAI  
AMCONSUL TORONTO  
USEU BRUSSELS  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USMISSION GENEVA  
HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
DIA WASHINGTON DC  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
CDRUSARPAC FT SHAFTER HI//APCW/APOP//  
CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J3/J332/J52//

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000393

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SCA (BOUCHER), SCA/INS AND PRM  
STATE ALSO PASS USAID  
AID/W FOR ANE/SCA, DCHA/FFP (DWORKEN, KSHEIN)  
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA (MORRISP, ACONVERY, RTHAYER, RKERR)  
ATHENS FOR PCARTER  
BANGKOK FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA (WBERGER)  
KATHMANDU FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA AND POL (SBERRY)  
GENEVA FOR RMA (NKYLOH, NHILGERT, MPITOTTI)  
USUN NEW YORK FOR ECOSOC (D MERCADO)  
SECDEF FOR OSD - POLICY  
PACOM ALSO FOR J-5

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: Northern Sri Lanka SitRep 46

Ref: A) Colombo 384 B) Colombo 374 C) Colombo 368 D) Colombo 361  
E) Colombo 360 F) Colombo 357 G) Colombo 351 H) Colombo 342 I)  
Colombo 329 J) Colombo 321 K) Colombo 320

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: U.N. satellite imagery documented clear indications of damage from sustained shelling and air strikes in the safe zone. Ambassador hosted a briefing for Co-Chair Heads of Mission by U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs Walter Kaelin. Norwegian Minister for International Development Solheim spoke with LTTE Political Head B. Nadesan on April 1, but broke no new ground. End Summary.

UN Imagery Documents Safe Zone Shelling  
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12. (SBU) U.N. satellite imagery taken on March 6, 15, 23 and 29 documented "clear indications" of damage "resulting from sustained shelling and air strikes" within the GSL-declared safe zone. The U.N. assessment documents an estimated 53 main buildings destroyed and another 5 severely damaged within the safe zone. The count does not include destruction or damage to IDP tent shelters. The imagery also indicated sustained shelling outside of the safe zone with "hundreds of buildings destroyed" in Puthukkudiyiruppu (PTK) and impact craters as large as 17 meters in diameter. U.N. figures indicate that 78% of civilian deaths from January 20 to March 31 occurred in the safe zone (Ref B). Ambassador recommended to U.N. Resident Representative Neil Buhne that he consider sharing the U.N. imagery with the GSL because it demonstrates that there is proof of shelling and could discourage future shelling if the government knows there is a mechanism for tracking it.

Ambassador and Other Chiefs  
Of Mission Meet Kaelin

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¶3. (SBU) Ambassador hosted a briefing for U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, Walter Kaelin, together with Co-Chair Heads of Mission. U.N. Resident Coordinator Neil Buhne also attended (but the Indian High Commissioner did not). The discussion centered on providing a uniform message to the GSL and the need for the government to implement confidence-building measures. The group agreed to encourage the GSL to focus on the following priorities:

- Identify space for potentially as many as 150-180K new IDPs in places closer to resettlement areas, such as Mannar and Pulmoddai.
- Develop a plan on where to send IDPs who are currently in temporary transit sites in Kilinochchi and Omanthai.
- Accelerate measures to provide freedom of movement for IDPs following issuance of identity cards. Establish a timetable for issuing these ID cards.
- Demilitarize the IDP camps as soon as possible and turn them over to civilian control. (Note: reports from Vavuniya indicate this process of demilitarization has already begun.)
- Release and resettle IDPs as soon as possible with the end of 2009 as the target.
- Issue visas to NGOs on an ongoing basis in order to provide personnel needed to assist GSL efforts to cope with a large and sudden influx of IDPs.

The group further agreed on the need to advocate with the GSL to handle IDPs in accordance with international humanitarian standards, including international access to screening centers.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador emphasized that the U.S. is most concerned about shelling into areas with concentrations of civilians. Participants agreed that it was incumbent on the GSL to show restraint when LTTE fire came from areas with large concentrations of civilians. Ambassador stated that the U.S. would support a special envoy to help secure the release of civilians in the safe zone. He ended by suggesting that we provide the GSL with brief and specific written guidance on the agreed upon points, which would likely be the most effective way to communicate the international community's concerns over the treatment of IDPs.

#### Norway-LTTE Call

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¶5. (SBU) Erik Solheim, the Norwegian Minister for International Development discussed by phone the plight of the civilians in Vanni with B. Nadesan, the head of the political wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam (LTTE) on April 1. Norwegian Ambassador Hattrem told Ambassador that Solheim communicated the international community's strong desire that the LTTE release civilians trapped in the safe zone and abide by international humanitarian law. According to the pro-LTTE website TamilNet, Nadesan labeled the GSL "genocidal" and stuck to existing LTTE positions that only an immediate ceasefire would end the massacre of civilians still in LTTE-held territory.

#### High Profile LTTE Casualties

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¶6. (SBU) The military reported that Charles Anthony Brigade Leader 'Amitab' and his deputy 'Kobith' were killed in two separate clashes in PTK April 3. (Note: Tamil sources have not confirmed the deaths. The military frequently disseminates unconfirmed reports and disinformation to the media to demoralize the Diaspora.)

#### Preparation for IDP Camps in Mannar

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¶7. (SBU) UNHCR and Government officials have started identifying areas in Mannar that could be used for additional IDP camps. Land that could house an additional 6,000 IDPs has been selected. The

Government is hoping to find more available land with access to water for another 20,000-30,000 civilians.

#### Civilian Casualties and IDP Outflow

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18. (SBU) Tamil sources from within the LTTE-controlled area report 25 civilians were killed and 56 injured on April 2. (Note: Such

reports from Tamil sources cannot be confirmed and are frequently exaggerated.) The Defense Ministry reported at least 279 civilians had reached government territory during the daytime yesterday (April 2).

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